

SPEECH
ON THE OCCASION OF THE
175TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE
HELLENIC DAY OF INDEPENDENCE

Your Grace, Mr Ambassador, our Visitors from Greece, Mr Kaloudis and Mr Dimas, Mr Consul General for Cyprus, Mr Consul General for Greece. Our very, very distinguished guests and friends the Mayors, First Citizens and Representatives of our Towns who have come from as far afield as Pretoria, Randfontein, Carletonville, Fochville, Vereeniging, Springs and Rustenburg, Honoured Guests. Our neighbouring towns are also represented ; Johannesburg, Germiston, Roodepoort, Krugersdorp, Benoni, Kempton Park, Alberton, Randburg, Sandton, and Brakpan.

Our MP's from Greece, Mr Kaloudis and Mr Dimas, who are representing the Greek Parliament on this occasion - a very hearty welcome to you indeed and thank you for honouring us with your presence. It is certain that you will witness that we Hellenes in South Africa, observe and celebrate this important historical day, with the same enthusiasm that our fellow Hellenes do in Greece.

Dear fellow Hellenes,

We are grateful to you all for being here today to share the 175TH Anniversary of the Hellenic Day of Independence.

The Hellenic Independence in 1821, made its mark in history, not only by the Hellenes for the Hellenes, but for the entire Western Civilization - the entire spectrum of democracy, civilized and cultured Society.

The Hellenes, were subjected to 400 years of tyranny and slavery, under the Ottoman Empire - Turkish rule. Very few could have survived what the Hellenes survived as an ethnos-nation - they survived not only as a peoples, but retained their language, their Religion, culture and during the last Century, spread it to the New World as a result of the immigration to countries such as the America's, United States, Canada, South America, Australia, Africa - including South Africa.

Our Independence is celebrated today throughout the world for the 175th time after 400 years of suppression by the Turks.

The Hellenes, are today celebrating and enjoying their Independence in the country which is the cradle of Western Civilization. 'Hellas' today, continues to be a very integral part of Western Civilization and is accepted by all Nations. It plays a very important role in the European Economy and in particular, the European Economic Union.

Yet unfortunately, the Hellenes are still subjected to tormentation and threats by the Turks. A country of some 64 million inhabitants, as opposed to 'Hellas' consisting of 10,5 million people, continues to threaten this small civilised and much respected country.

We have seen that the interpretation and understanding of democracy and Human Rights by the Turks, leaves a lot to be desired. We have seen their actions and the results in Cyprus, since 1974. To them, it is of no consequence what happened to the lost and unaccounted Human Beings in Cyprus during the invasion by Turkey. They refuse to observe and respect the directions of the United Nations and other Leaders, who are seeking to bring about a solution to the Cyprus problem. This is all a reflection of the undemocratic and even uncivilized actions by the Turks towards their neighbours and fellow beings. After nearly a quarter of a Century, we now have 'Denktash' publicly admitting that a great number of prisoners in Cyprus were killed by the Turkish fighters. Why this cruel announcement now? What devious programme have the Turks in store for all?

We recently saw what transpired at the Imia Islands and yet again, we see that Turkey is not willing to allow the matter to be judged by the International Courts of Justice. Turkey continues to threaten the sovereignty of Greece.

Mr Mayors, Councillors, please remember that the Hellenes in your towns form a very integral part of your town and community. They do not operate as an isolated island within your area, or, for that matter, in the entire Republic. They play a very, very important role in your community - economic, cultural and all other avenues. You merrily have to look around at the employment opportunities created and the investments made by the Hellenes in your town. We have no doubt that as a minority group, per capita, the Hellenes rank among the highest in providing employment and investment opportunities in the Republic.

We respect our State President, Mr Nelson Mandela, for not accepting the honour bestowed upon him by the Turkish Government, in view of the State President's attitude regarding the Turkish portrayal and understanding of Human rights. They still disrespect Human rights. We are grateful to the South African Government, for refusing to supply arms to Turkey. Although this is not an action taken by the South African Government, in support of the Hellenes - it nevertheless, is a reflection that the Hellenes are perfectly correct in their outcries. That their neighbour is still the one who disrespects Human rights and democracy. It will indeed take a lot of adjustment on their part before they can be accepted into the democratic world.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have a message from our State President, Mr Nelson Mandela, who I know would very much have liked to have been with us today, but certain important commitments have not made this possible. Nevertheless, he has found time to forward a message to us, which I think is not only meant for the South African Hellenes here today, but is meant for Hellenes throughout the world. Mr Ambassador, Representatives of the Greek Government, I am certain that you will see that this message is portrayed to Greece and to all Hellenic Communities throughout the world. We are grateful to our State President.

I am indeed privileged and honoured to be able to deliver this message from our State President, Mr Nelson Mandela, to the Hellenes in South Africa and throughout the world on this occasion:

(MESSAGE ENCLOSED SEPARATELY)

I will be failing if I did not thank all those responsible and whose hard work, effort, dedication and co-operation, made this event possible - thank you.

Fellow Hellenes, thank you for being here today, thank you for showing that we are a united Nation and that we will not allow our country of origin, 'Hellas', to be threatened, or to have our Independence impeded in any manner whatsoever.

Dear friends, thank you again. Thank you for sharing this day with us and please accept our hospitality with the sincerity and the warmth which we approach and welcome you to this very important Hellenic occasion.

DELIVERED ON 24 MARCH 1996

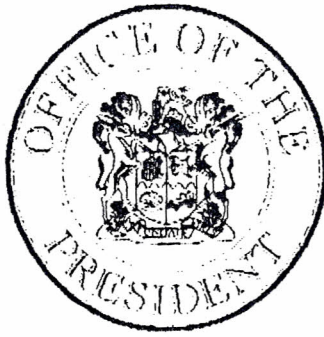
AT THE GREEK SPORTING CLUB, SENDERWOOD

P STATHOULIS

24 March 1996

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Taynhuys



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**MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT NELSON MANDELA ON THE
OCCASION OF THE NATIONAL DAY OF GREECE, 25 March 1996**

On the occasion of the National Day of Greece on 25 March, I personally, as President of the Republic of South Africa and its people congratulate you, the people of Hellenic origin throughout the world on the 175th Anniversary of your Independence.

The contribution of Greece to Democracy and human rights culture goes back to more than two and a half thousand years.

We, in South Africa in common with the rest of the world, have benefitted from it.

Your community has made a significant contribution to our economic and cultural life. We are sure that you will contribute to our efforts to make South Africa a better and more just society for all.

We wish you well for the future and look forward to even closer co-operation with Greece, your country of origin.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Mandela".

**Nelson Mandela
President of the Republic of South Africa**

Tuynhuys



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A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Mandela".

**Nelson Mandela
President of the Republic of South Africa**